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Evening Papers .. 1st March 1939.  
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RETAIL PRICES - DECEMBER QUARTER 1938.

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for December quarter 1938 (with base 1000 in 1923-27 for the six State Capitals) were Brisbane 839, Toowoomba 802, Rockhampton 823, Townsville 906, Bundaberg 788, Charters Towers 763 and Warwick 758.

From September to December quarter 1938 there were decreases in the "B" Series indexes in Brisbane (0.71 per cent), Toowoomba (1.47 per cent), Rockhampton (0.72 per cent) and Bundaberg (0.38 per cent). Increases were recorded for Townsville (0.11 per cent) Charters Towers (0.93 per cent) and Warwick (0.53 per cent). Food and grocery costs were lower in the four first mentioned cities and higher in the last three. The Rent index rose in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Bundaberg and Warwick. There was a decline in Toowoomba and no alteration in Charters Towers. In Brisbane the most important decreases in price between the months of September and December were for potatoes, onions, soap, bacon, beef, and mutton. Bread, flour and eggs were the chief increases. The weighted average rent of four and five roomed houses in Brisbane rose from 227.43d. to 228.94d. between August and November.

Compared with December quarter 1937, the percentage increases in the Food and Rent Indexes were Brisbane 1.21, Rockhampton 1.11, Townsville 2.72, Bundaberg 4.65, Charters Towers 5.24, and Warwick 7.06. In Toowoomba the index was the same as a year earlier. Food and groceries were dearer in all cities than a year earlier (particularly in Charters Towers, Warwick and Townsville), while rents increased in all cities other than Toowoomba where there was a slight decrease. In Brisbane items to show an increase in price included bread, flour, jam, raisins, potatoes, onions, butter, cheese, and pork. Decreases were recorded for tea, soap, eggs, bacon, beef, and mutton.

"ALL ITEMS" - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers for December quarter 1938 (with base 1000 in 1923-27 for the six State Capitals) were Brisbane 855, Toowoomba 839, Rockhampton 852, Townsville 906, Bundaberg 834, Charters Towers 848, and Warwick 816.

From September to December quarter 1938 there were slight increases in the "C" Series index numbers in Townsville (0.11 per cent), Charters Towers (0.59 per cent) and Warwick (0.37 per cent), but the decreases recorded for other cities were Brisbane (0.35 per cent), Toowoomba (0.83 per cent), Rockhampton (0.58 per cent) and Bundaberg (0.12 per cent). In Brisbane food and grocery costs decreased 1.53 per cent., rent of four and five roomed houses increased 0.59 per cent., clothing and footwear increased 0.48 per cent., and the cost of miscellaneous items (consisting of household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, union dues, lodge dues, fares, newspapers, etc.) was very slightly lower. Clothing and footwear cost a little more in all cities; and in the miscellaneous group, the most noteworthy variations were due to decreases in the electricity tariffs in Rockhampton and Townsville.

Compared with December quarter 1937, the "C" index rose in all cities except Toowoomba where there was no change. The percentage increases were Brisbane 1.30, Rockhampton 0.71, Townsville 1.80, Bundaberg 2.58, Charters Towers 3.16, and Warwick 4.21. In Brisbane food and grocery costs increased 0.24 per cent., rent 2.66 per cent., clothing and footwear 2.22 per cent., and miscellaneous items 0.64 per cent. The clothing and footwear index was higher in all cities than a year earlier, and the miscellaneous group index rose a little in Brisbane, Charters Towers and Warwick. There were decreases in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and Bundaberg - all largely due to decreased charges for electricity.

In December quarter 1938, the Brisbane index was 14.46 per cent. above that for March quarter 1933, when the index was 747, - the lowest point reached in the depression years.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN THE QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts necessary in December quarter 1938 to purchase what would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

City	All Items	Food and Groceries	Rent (4 and 5 Rooms)	Clothing and Footwear
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Brisbane ..	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0
Toowoomba ..	19. 8	18.11	19. 6	1. 0. 0
Rockhampton ..	19.11	1. 0.11	17. 8	1. 0. 5
Townsville ..	1. 1. 2	1. 2. 6	1. 0. 3	1. 0. 3
Bundaberg ..	19. 6	1. 1. 2	15. 2	1. 0. 2
Charters Towers ..	19.10	1. 2. 6	11. 7	1. 0. 6
Warwick ..	19. 1	19.11	15. 4	19.11

COMPARISON OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATES BASIC WAGES.

In the following statement the present State Basic Wage of £4. 1. 0 in Brisbane is compared in the first column with the amounts required to purchase the same amount of commodities in the other capitals. The second column shows the actual State Basic wages and the third the actual Commonwealth Basic wages in the capitals. All comparisons are on the basis of December quarter 1938 index numbers.

Capital	Equivalent of £4. 1. 0 in Brisbane a.	State Basic Wage b.	Commonwealth Basic Wage c.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Brisbane ..	4. 1. 0	4. 1. 0	3.15. 0
Sydney ..	4. 7. 4	d.	4. 1. 0
Melbourne ..	4. 5.10	e.	3.19. 0
Adelaide ..	4. 4. 7	3.18. 0	3.16. 0
Perth ..	4. 3. 9	4. 1. 1	3.16. 0
Hobart ..	4. 4. 7	e.	3.16. 0

- Based on "All Items" index "C" Series.
- Current Rates.
- Corresponding to December quarter "Court" index numbers with the addition of the special loadings. To be operative from beginning of first pay period in March.
- The Basic Wage of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration is adopted in State awards.
- No State wage actually declared but follows Commonwealth rates to a large extent.

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1st March, 1939.



RETAIL PRICES INDEXES.

Table No. 1. FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-27 in Six State Capitals)

TOWN	Year Ending Decr. 1928	Year Ending Decr. 1937	Year Ending Decr. 1938	QUARTERS ENDING				
				Decr. 1937	March 1938	June 1938	Sept. 1938	Decr. 1938
Brisbane ..	901	824	838	829	832	834	845	839
Toowoomba ..	833	810	806	802	804	804	814	802
Rockhampton ..	858	808	825	814	820	826	829	823
Townsville ..	1047	877	900	882	891	899	905	906
Bundaberg ..	(b)	752	781	753	766	780	791	788
Weighted Average-								
Five Towns (a)	892	823	837	827	831	834	844	838
Charters Towers	942	727	751	725	738	745	756	763
Warwick ..	841	707	732	708	703	714	754	758

Table No. 2. THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-27 in Six State Capitals)

TOWN	Year Ending Decr. 1928	Year Ending Decr. 1937	Year Ending Decr. 1938	QUARTERS ENDING				
				Decr. 1937	March 1938	June 1938	Sept. 1938	Decr. 1938
Brisbane ..	917	837	852	844	846	850	858	855
Toowoomba ..	906	840	843	839	841	844	846	839
Rockhampton ..	903	840	853	846	849	854	857	852
Townsville ..	1023	883	902	890	895	901	905	906
Bundaberg ..	(b)	809	831	813	821	833	835	834
Weighted Average-								
Five Towns (a)	915	840	854	846	849	853	859	856
Charters Towers	925	819	839	822	829	836	843	848
Warwick ..	914	779	800	783	780	789	813	816

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September Quarter 1936.

Table No. 3. AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES.

Brisbane.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity			MONTH OF			Commodity and Unit of Quantity			MONTH OF		
			Decr. 1937	Sept. 1938	Decr. 1938				Decr. 1937	Sept. 1938	Decr. 1938
			d.	d.	d.				d.	d.	d.
Bread ..	2 lb.	5.48	5.00	5.50	Eggs ..	1 doz.	18.09	15.55	16.82		
Flour ..	2 lb.	3.91	3.23	3.95	Milk ..	1 quart	6.00	6.00	6.00		
Tea ..	1 lb.	27.23	27.05	27.05	Bacon (Rashers)	1 lb.	15.32	15.36	14.73		
Sugar ..	1 lb.	3.98	3.98	3.98	Beef - Sirloin						
Jam (Plum) ..	1½ lb.	7.78	7.95	7.95	Roast ..	1 lb.	8.45	8.85	8.80		
Raisins ..	1 lb.	10.09	10.50	10.64	Beef - Steak						
Potatoes ..	7 lb.	7.50	14.73	10.73	Rump ..	1 lb.	11.40	11.30	11.35		
Onions ..	1 lb.	0.95	2.04	1.95	Beef - Rolled						
Soap ..	1 lb.	6.36	6.24	6.18	Brisket ..	1 lb.	5.50	5.50	5.45		
Butter ..	1 lb.	18.05	19.00	19.00	Mutton - Leg	1 lb.	8.25	8.00	7.85		
Cheese ..	1 lb.	12.82	13.32	13.27	Mutton - Chops						
					Loin ..	1 lb.	8.25	8.10	7.75		
					Pork - Leg	1 lb.	10.90	11.45	11.55		